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COUNTRIES**

**JUNCAL CUÑADO**

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# STRUCTURAL BREAKS AND REAL CONVERGENCE IN OPEC COUNTRIES

Juncal Cuñado\*

## Abstract

This article examines real convergence hypothesis in OPEC countries (Algeria, Angola, Ecuador, Gabon, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Venezuela) by means of using time series techniques and allowing for structural breaks. The results show the existence of structural breaks in the convergence process, most of them occurring around 1979-81, which suggests that this convergence process is related to the evolution of the oil price. Furthermore, when applying unit root tests allowing for structural breaks, we only find evidence of catch-up towards the U.S. economy for the case of Indonesia, and for Angola in the last years of the sample. When we define alternative reference economies, we also find evidence of conditional convergence with structural breaks, but only for Nigeria within Africa and for Kuwait relative to countries in West-Asia.

**Keywords:** Real convergence; Unit root tests; OPEC countries; Structural breaks.

**JEL classification:** C32; O41.

\***Corresponding author:** Juncal Cuñado, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona (31080), Spain. E-mail: [jcunado@unav.es](mailto:jcunado@unav.es)

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## **1. Introduction**

There has been in recent years an emerging body of empirical literature on convergence in per capita output across different economies. The interest on this subject may be explained, at least in part, as a prediction test of the neoclassical growth model (Solow, 1956) as opposed to the “new” endogenous growth models (see, for example, Romer, 1986 and Lucas, 1988). As it is well known, the neoclassical model predicts (under some assumptions) that per capita output will converge to each country’s steady-state (conditional convergence) or to a common steady-state (unconditional convergence), regardless of its initial per capita output level. On the contrary, in endogenous growth models there is no tendency for income levels to converge, since divergence can be generated by relaxing some of the neoclassical assumptions (e.g., incorporating non convexities in the production function).

Furthermore, the great differences observed in per capita output and in growth rates across countries justify a deeper study on convergence. However, among the great number of empirical papers which studies convergence, no attention has been paid to the OPEC experience. The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is currently a cartel of 12 countries made of Algeria, Angola, Ecuador, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Venezuela<sup>1</sup>. OPEC nations still account for two-thirds of the world's oil reserves, and, as of March 2008, 35.6% of the world's oil production, affording them considerable control over the global oil market.

Until World War II, economic literature believed that natural resources were an important factor affecting economic growth, while recent evidence has found that countries rich in natural resources grow slower on average than natural

resource poor countries (see, for example, Sala-i-Martin, 1997; Sachs and Warner, 1999, 2001 and Mehlum *et al.*, 2006 among others). This article examines the real convergence hypothesis in 14 OPEC countries during the second half of the twentieth century. Although all the analyzed countries are rich in natural resources, oil, there are great differences among them: first, from the 14 countries belonging to the OPEC, seven are situated in the Middle East, five in Africa and two in South America; second, there are great differences in the year they joined the OPEC organization, and the size of the country; third, there are also great differences in the quotas of each of the countries (for example, while Saudi Arabia produces 10,000 thousands of barrels of oil per day, Ecuador only produces 500).

**TABLE 1. Average growth rates, different periods**

	Average growth rates of per capita GDP series			
	1950-2006	1950-1970	1971-1990	1991-2006
Algeria	0.017	0.025	0.014	0.010
Angola	0.004	0.026	-0.036	0.025
Libya	0.020	0.118	-0.054	-0.009
Gabon	0.003	0.032	-0.010	0.015
Nigeria	0.011	0.019	0.001	0.015
Ecuador	0.012	0.021	0.016	-0.002
Venezuela	0.004	0.018	-0.012	0.009
Indonesia	0.029	0.018	0.037	0.032
Iran	0.023	0.044	-0.009	0.035
Iraq	0.001	0.047	-0.017	-0.034
Kuwait	-0.015	0.003	-0.080	0.044
Qatar	-0.016	0.004	-0.079	0.037
Saudi Arabia	0.025	0.061	0.008	-0.001
United Arab Emirates	-0.003	0.022	-0.032	-0.001
Total Africa	0.011	0.020	0.003	0.010
Latin America (15)	0.015	0.020	0.011	0.013
East Asia (16)	0.037	0.038	0.032	0.041
West Asia (15)	0.023	0.040	0.009	0.019
U.S.	0.021	0.023	0.022	0.018

The evolution of oil prices in the last fifty years has been subject to many changes: after the 1973 and 1979 oil crisis, oil prices experienced an increase until

<sup>1</sup> In this paper, two former OPEC members are included, Gabon and Indonesia. Indonesia's membership from OPEC was voluntarily suspended in 2008 as it became a net importer of oil. Gabon left the OPEC organization in 1994.

mid-80's, and then they started to decrease. As shown in Table 1, average growth rates of analyzed countries seem to be related to the evolution of oil prices. However, there has been substantial diversity across countries (see Table 1). As shown in this table, while the average growth rate of per capita GDP series were negative for many OPEC countries during the period 1971-1990, the average growth rate for Indonesia was 3.7% and 1.6% and 1.4% for Ecuador and Algeria. However, average growth rates are higher for the last period of the sample (2.6% average growth rate for Angola, 3.2 for Indonesia, 3.4% for Iran and Qatar, etc.).

The differential behaviour of the growth rates of these countries, their difficulties to converge to real per capita GDP levels of developed countries and the little research found in the literature regarding this group of countries motivates the analysis on real convergence made in this paper. In this paper we define real convergence towards two different reference economies: first, and as a global reference, we examine the real convergence hypothesis towards the U.S. economy; second, we also define alternative regional references, so that, depending on the continent of each of the analyzed countries, we use as references, the per capita GDP average of the region (Africa, Latin America, East Asia and West Asia).

Empirical testing of the convergence hypothesis provides several definitions of convergence and thus, different methodologies to test it. In a cross-section approach, a negative (partial) correlation between growth rates and initial income is interpreted as evidence of unconditional (conditional) beta-convergence. In this framework, one of the most generally accepted results is that while there is no evidence of unconditional convergence among a broad sample of countries, the conditional convergence hypothesis holds when examining more homogenous groups of countries (or regions) or when conditioning on additional explanatory variables. Examples in this context are Baumol (1986), De Long (1988), Dowrick

and Nguyen (1989), Grier and Tullock (1989), Barro (1991), Barro and Sala-i-Martin (1991, 1992, 1995), Mankiw *et al.* (1992), etc..

In a time series approach, stochastic convergence asks whether permanent movements in one country's per capita output are associated with permanent movements in another countries' output, that is, it examines, whether common stochastic elements matter, and how much persistent the differences among countries are. Thus, stochastic convergence implies that output differences among economies cannot contain unit roots. Empirical tests on this hypothesis have been carried out by Campbell and Mankiw (1989), Cogley (1990), Bernard (1991), Carlino and Mills (1993), Bernard and Durlauf (1995), Cuñado *et al.* (2003), Beliu and Higgins (2004), and, in general, they do not find evidence of convergence.

However, when the convergence tests take into account the possibility of structural breaks, the evidence of convergence is reinforced. Greasley and Oxley (1997) found evidence of bivariate convergence between Belgium and Netherlands, France and Italy, Australia and the U.K., and Sweden and Denmark. St. Aubyn (1999) finds evidence of convergence between U.S. and each of the U.K., Australia and Japan, using the Kalman filter methodology. Cellini and Scorcu (2000) detect stochastic convergence only for the U.S. and Canada, and the U.S. and the U.K. when they allow for structural breaks. Strazicich *et al.* (2003) examine the differences in per capita incomes of fifteen OECD countries with the U.S. economy over the period 1870-1994 allowing for two structural breaks and they reject the unit root null hypothesis in eleven of the fifteen countries, thus supporting the stochastic convergence hypothesis.

In this paper, we apply time series convergence tests allowing for structural breaks to the differences in per capita output for 14 OPEC countries using data for the period 1950-2006. The outline of the paper is as follows. Section 2 describes

the methodology employed in the article to test for convergence. Section 3 covers the empirical analysis and Section 4 offers some conclusions.

## 2. Time Series Convergence Tests

In a time series testing framework, countries  $i$  and  $j$  converge if their outputs are cointegrated with cointegrating vector [1,-1], that is, the difference  $y_{i,t+k} - y_{j,t+k}$  must be a stationary I(0) process with no deterministic components (unconditional convergence), where  $y_i$  is the log real GDP per capita in country  $i$  and likewise  $y_j$  for country  $j$ .

Since most of the procedures for testing the unit root hypothesis include the cases of no regressors, an intercept, and an intercept and a linear trend, we can distinguish between long-run convergence (unconditional or conditional<sup>2</sup> depending on the significance of the intercept,  $\alpha_0$  in equation (1)) and convergence as a catch-up (if the log of relative output is trend stationary,  $\alpha_1 > 0$  in equation (1)). Although this last definition<sup>3</sup> may be open to criticism because the presence of a time trend allows for permanent per capita output differences, it might be appropriate in a context in which convergence is an on-going process (see Bernard and Durlauf, 1995 and Oxley and Greasly, 1995), as the one observed for less developed countries, such as some of the OPEC countries analyzed in this paper. In this context, we will test for convergence analyzing the integration order of the relative incomes using the following equation:

$$\Delta RI_t = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 t + \beta RI_{t-1} + \sum_{j=1}^p c_j \Delta RI_{t-j} + e_t, \quad (1)$$

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<sup>2</sup> According to neoclassical models, unconditional or absolute convergence holds when per capita GDP of the different countries converge to the same steady state. In contrast, conditional convergence applies when per capita GDP of each economy converge to its own steady state. In this last case, the constant  $\alpha_0$  measures the differences in the steady state of each of the economies.

<sup>3</sup> Carlino and Mills (1993), for example, use this methodology in order to allow initially low income countries to grow faster than higher income countries.

where  $RI_t = \ln(y_t^{US}) - \ln(y_t^i)$ , the  $p$  extra regressors,  $\square RI_{t-j}$  are added to eliminate possible serial correlation in the error terms.

However, these types of unit root tests may fail to recognise convergence when structural breaks are present. For example, St. Aubyn (1999), Cellini and Scorcu (2000) show that the introduction of structural breaks makes the existence of convergence across countries more clear.

For the OPEC economies, we could think in the existence of one or more breaks in the convergence process during the period 1950-2006. As Perron (1989) pointed out, these tests perform poorly when there is a break in the constant or deterministic trend function. However, Perron's method has been criticized on the grounds that the break point is chosen exogenously. Several authors, such as Christiano (1992), Perron and Vogelsang (1992) or Zivot and Andrews (1992) have developed methods to endogenously search for a break point and test for the presence of a unit root when the process has a broken constant or trend and have demonstrated that their test are robust and more powerful than the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF, Dickey-Fuller, 1979) and Phillips-Perron (1988) tests<sup>4</sup>. However, these last procedures have also been criticized in the literature (see, for example, Nunes *et al.*, 1997 and Lee and Strazicich, 2001, 2003 among others), since these type of tests derive their critical values assuming no breaks under the null, so that, in the presence of a unit root with break, these tests will tend to reject the null hypothesis suggesting that the time series is stationary around a break when it is nonstationary with a break. In order to solve this problem, we will use the endogenous two-break<sup>5</sup> LM unit root test proposed by Lee and Strazicich (2003) which is unaffected by breaks under the null<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Recent empirical application of these tests can be found in Leybourne and Newbold (2003), Atkins and Chan (2004), Sen (2004) or Narayan (2005a,b), among others.

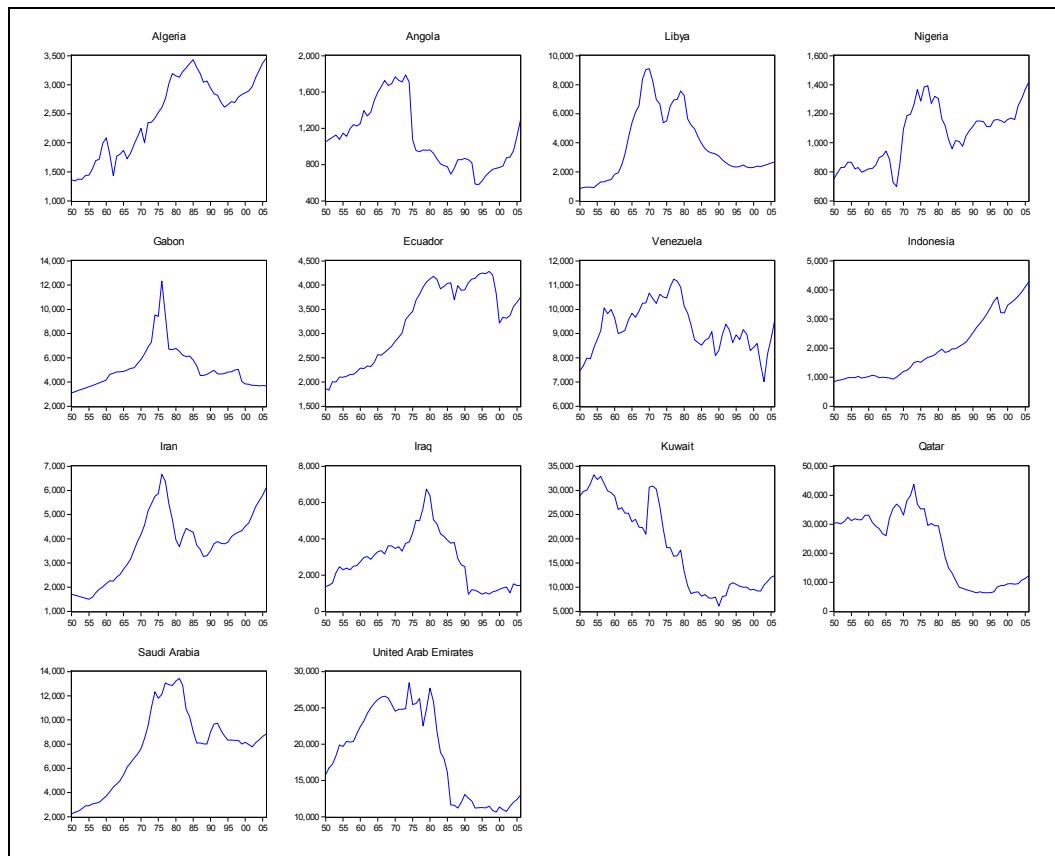
<sup>5</sup> We use this two-break LM unit root test and not the one-break LM test because an examination of the empirical results reveals that the two structural breaks included in the model were significant in all the analyzed countries for the period 1950-2003.

<sup>6</sup> See Lee and Strazicich (2003) for a more detailed description of the test. The computation of the LM unit root test statistic has been carried out using the Gauss codes provided by Junsoo Lee and available on the web site <http://www.cba.ua.edu/~jlee/gauss>.

### 3. Empirical Analysis

The data used in this section are annual log real GDP per capita in 1990 Geary-Khamis PPP-adjusted dollars. The series runs from 1950 to 2006 for 14 OPEC countries (Algeria, Angola, Ecuador, Gabon, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Venezuela). As reference economies, we use per capita GDP in the U.S., and an average of per capita GDP in Africa, Latin America, East Asia and West Asia. All the variables have been obtained from Maddison (2001). The temporal evolution of the variables are shown in Figure 1.

**FIGURE 1. Real per capita GDP (in logs), 1950-2006**



First, we carry out ADF unit root tests to each of the series in order to obtain the integration order of each of the series (see Table 2). As convergence measure,

we define the differences of each of the log real per capita GDP series with respect to the U.S. and to the alternative regional references.

**TABLE 2. ADF unit root tests**

Testing the integration order of the log real per capita GDP series

	With no regressors	With an intercept	With an intercept and a linear time trend
Algeria	1.81	-0.89	-1.52
Angola	0.03	-1.43	-1.18
Ecuador	3.14	-0.47	-1.42
Gabon	-0.46	-1.76	-1.70
Indonesia	5.04	2.31	-0.85
Iran	0.54	-1.41	-2.16
Iraq	-0.47	-1.09	-1.60
Kuwait	-1.49	-1.12	-1.30
Libya	-0.77	-1.91	-1.92
Nigeria	0.95	-0.81	-1.80
Qatar	-1.18	-0.71	-1.22
Saudi Arabia	0.04	-1.87	-1.59
United Arab Emirates	-0.4	-0.79	-2.15
Venezuela	0.62	-2.47	-2.61
Africa	2.04	-0.78	-1.52
Latin America	2.45	-0.18	-1.67
East Asia	4.36	3.98	2.30
West Asia	1.24	-0.95	-2.01
U.S.	8.31	1.83	-2.35

The 10%, 5% and 1% critical values are: model with no regressors: -1.61, -1.95, -2.61; model with an intercept:-2.60, -2.92, -3.57; model with an intercept and a linear time trend: -3.18, -3.50, -4.16. In any of the cases, we can reject the null hypothesis of unit root. When ADF unit root tests are applied to the first differences of the logs of these variables (growth rates of per capita GDPs), the unit root null hypothesis is rejected in all the cases. Therefore, per capita GDP are considered I(1) series.

The results from the ADF tests to the differences of each of per capita GDP series with respect to the U.S. and the regional references are reported in Table 3. We are unable to reject the unit root hypothesis in favor of unconditional convergence for any of the OPEC countries towards the U.S. economy. When we include an intercept and a time trend in the model, we are also unable to reject the unit root hypothesis in favor or conditional convergence or catch-up towards this economy. However, when we analyze convergence towards alternative reference economies, we find evidence of conditional convergence of Nigeria towards the African average.

**TABLE 3. ADF unit root tests on per capita GDP differences**

	With no regressor s	With an intercept	With an intercept and a linear time trend	Converging?
Differences of log real per capita GDP series with the U.S.				
Algeria	0.32	-1.39	-1.96	U
Angola	0.32	-1.19	-1.07	U
Ecuador	0.70	-0.85	-1.63	U
Gabon	1.39	0.32	-1.49	U
Indonesia	-1.00	-0.75	-2.40	U
Iran	-0.68	-2.08	-2.13	U
Iraq	0.70	-0.26	-2.04	U
Kuwait	-0.77	-1.07	-0.86	U
Libya	-0.41	-1.22	-1.91	U
Nigeria	0.13	-1.86	-2.53	U
Qatar	-0.99	-0.95	-1.20	U
Saudi Arabia	-0.78	-1.67	-1.74	U
United Arab Emirates	-0.34	0.04	-2.18	U
Venezuela	1.59	-0.38	-3.01	U
Differences of log real per capita GDP series with Africa				
Algeria	0.84	-1.10	-1.73	U
Angola	-0.97	-1.27	-1.59	U
Gabon	-0.75	-0.41	-1.37	U
Libya	-1.10	-1.84	-1.93	U
Nigeria	-0.88	-2.94**	-2.98	C
Differences of log real per capita GDP series with Latin America				
Ecuador	1.61	0.03	-1.81	U
Venezuela	-0.89	-0.61	-2.92	U
Differences of log real per capita GDP with East Asia				
Indonesia	1.29	0.62	-0.44	U
Differences of log real per capita GDP series with West Asia				
Iran	-1.56	-2.30	-2.37	U
Iraq	1.17	0.33	-1.87	U
Kuwait	-1.79*	-1.07	-1.31	D
Qatar	-1.43	-0.57	-1.38	U
Saudi Arabia	-0.65	-1.77	-1.44	U
United Arab Emirates	-0.77	-0.36	-2.32	U

The critical values are: Model with no regressors: -1.61, -1.95, -2.61. Model with an intercept:-2.60, -2.92, -3.57. Model with an intercept and a linear time trend: -3.18, -3.50, -4.16. \*, \*\* and \*\*\* indicate significant at the 10%, 5% and 1% levels respectively. C denotes catch-up, D denotes divergence, and U denotes unit root.

The little evidence of convergence or catch-up among this group of countries could be due to the existence of different convergence speeds in the convergence process or the case in which countries pass through convergence to nonconvergence processes (or viceversa), two possibilities which will be studied

while allowing for structural breaks when applying the minimum Lagrange Multiplier statistic suggested by Lee and Strazicich (2003).

**TABLE 4. LM unit root tests on per capita GDP differences with one break**

	Change in the intercept			Change in both the intercept and the linear time trend		
	LM stat	T <sub>B</sub>	Converging?	LM stat	T <sub>B</sub>	Converging?
<b>Differences of log real per capita GDP series with the U.S.</b>						
Algeria	-2.85	1961	U	-3.48	1961	U
Angola	-2.14	1992	U	-3.22	1973	U
Ecuador	-2.93	1986	U	-4.16	1981	U
Gabon	-2.12	1978	U	-3.84	1978	U
Indonesia	-2.78	1970	U	-4.46*	1963	C
Iran	-3.14	1981	U	-3.33	1984	U
Iraq	-2.15	1997	U	-4.63*	1989	D
Kuwait	-1.89	1989	U	-4.12	1979	U
Libya	-1.91	1974	U	-2.41	1979	U
Nigeria	-2.66	1977	U	-3.97	1981	U
Qatar	-2.81	1997	U	-4.09	1981	U
Saudi Arabia	-2.59	1989	U	-4.49*	1981	D
United Arab Emirates	-1.84	1988	U	-3.96	1991	U
Venezuela	-1.68	1995	U	-3.54	1981	U
<b>Differences of log real per capita GDP series with Africa</b>						
Algeria	-3.34	1961	U	-3.29	1961	U
Angola	-2.28	1965	U	-3.33	1982	U
Gabon	-2.36	1975	U	-4.50*	1972	D
Libya	-2.33	1974	U	-3.63	1978	U
Nigeria	-2.41	1974	U	-4.21*	1967	C
<b>Differences of log real per capita GDP series with Latin America</b>						
Ecuador	-2.84	1992	U	-4.68*	1986	D
Venezuela	-1.67	1979	U	-4.30	1978	U
<b>Differences of log real per capita GDP series with Hong Kong</b>						
Indonesia	-1.41	1999	U	-5.00*	1972	C
<b>Differences of log real per capita GDP series with West Asia</b>						
Iran	-2.98	1981	U	-3.44	1986	U
Iraq	-1.98	1994	U	-7.95**	1989	D
Kuwait	-2.46	1969	U	-4.53*	1980	D
Qatar	-2.73	1965	U	-4.55*	1981	D
Saudi Arabia	-2.13	1989	U	-4.35	1974	U
United Arab Emirates	-1.87	1977	U	-3.12	1983	U

The 10%, 5% and 1% asymptotic critical values have been obtained from Lee and Strazicich (2001). \*, \*\* and \*\*\* indicate significant at the 10%, 5% and 1% levels, respectively. C denotes catch-up, D denotes divergence, and U denotes unit root.

In Table 4 we report the minimum LM statistic and the date of the break when we allow for only one break, while Table 5 reports the minimum LM statistic and the date of the breaks when the possibility of two structural breaks is included.

**TABLE 5. LM unit root tests on per capita GDP differences with two breaks**

	Change in the intercept			Change in both the intercept and the linear time trend		
	LM stat	T <sub>B1</sub>	T <sub>B2</sub>	LM stat	T <sub>B1</sub>	T <sub>B2</sub>
<b>Differences of log real per capita GDP series with the U.S.</b>						
Algeria	-2.85	1960	1976	U	-4.47	1959
Angola	-2.15	1973	1995	U	-5.42*	1973
Ecuador	-3.01	1986	1998	U	-5.30	1971
Gabon	-2.53	1975	1978	U	-6.72**	1972
Indonesia	-3.28	1978	2001	U	-5.58*	1962
Iran	-3.17	1976	1980	U	-4.97	1971
Iraq	-1.94	1978	1998	U	-7.02**	1970
Kuwait	-2.50	1968	1998	U	-5.62*	1977
Libya	-1.96	1972	1979	U	-5.41*	1968
Nigeria	-2.94	1976	1979	U	-4.57	1968
Qatar	-2.81	1997	2000	U	-4.94	1978
Saudi Arabia	-2.90	1982	1986	U	-6.62**	1970
United Arab Emirates	-1.92	1972	1976	U	-5.02	1968
Venezuela	-2.03	1988	1995	U	-5.23	1980
<b>Differences of log real per capita GDP series with Africa</b>						
Algeria	-3.55	1961	1987	U	-5.08	1961
Angola	-2.29	1965	1972	U	-4.87	1973
Gabon	-3.16	1978	1984	U	-4.38	1965
Libya	-2.51	1974	1981	U	-6.71**	1966
Nigeria	-2.57	1972	1974	U	-6.60**	1966
<b>Differences of log real per capita GDP series with Latin America</b>						
Ecuador	-3.11	1986	1992	U	-6.93**	1980
Venezuela	-1.72	1979	1988	U	-5.07	1964
<b>Differences of log real per capita GDP series with East Asia</b>						
Indonesia	-1.52	1983	1999	U	-6.18**	1965
<b>Differences of log real per capita GDP series with West Asia</b>						
Iran	-3.11	1981	1997	U	-4.64	1962
Iraq	-2.13	1987	1990	U	-7.62**	1971
Kuwait	-2.48	1969	1998	U	-5.73*	1968
Qatar	-2.63	1965	1977	U	-5.12	1981
Saudi Arabia	-2.21	1976	1983	U	-5.50*	1981
United Arab Emirates	-1.99	1977	1985	U	-4.80	1969

The 10%, 5% and 1% asymptotic critical values have been obtained from Lee and Strazicich (2001). \*, \*\* and \*\*\* indicate significant at the 10%, 5% and 1% levels, respectively. C denotes catch-up D denotes divergence and U denotes unit root.

The main results presented in these tables may be summarized as follows:  
First, a broad examination of the significance of the dummy variables indicate that

the convergence processes of the different OPEC countries have experienced structural changes which should be taken into account when analyzing the order of integration of relative incomes. For example, when we allow for a break, this occurs for most of the countries in 1979-1981, coinciding with the end of the 1979 oil crisis, when oil prices start increasing. When we include the possibility of two structural breaks, the results suggest the existence of a break at the end of sixties or beginning of seventies, before the 1973 oil crisis, and a second one at the mid-eighties-beginning of nineties.

Second, we can reject the unit root null hypothesis (in model C) in three cases (Indonesia, Iraq and Saudi Arabia) when allowing for a structural break and in 6 cases when including two structural breaks (Angola, Indonesia, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya and Saudi Arabia), when analyzing per capita GDP differences with respect to the U.S. However, stationarity does not mean convergence, since it is also needed that countries with a per capita output level below average must have grown more than the average. In order to test for this hypothesis, we follow Tomljanovich and Vogelsang (2002) and Nieswiadomy and Strazicich (2004) and study if there has been a catch-up process in per capita output after the structural break for all these cases, so that we run the following two regressions (depending on whether we allow for one or two breaks):

$$RI_t = \mu_1 + \mu_2 + \beta_1 t_1 + \beta_2 t_2 + u_t , \quad (2.1)$$

$$RI_t = \mu_1 + \mu_2 + \mu_3 + \beta_1 t_1 + \beta_2 t_2 + \beta_3 t_3 + u_t , \quad (2.2)$$

where, for example, in equation (2.2),  $\mu_1$  and  $\beta_1$  are the intercept and the slope before the first break,  $\mu_2$  and  $\beta_2$  the intercept and the slope after the first break and  $\mu_3$  and  $\beta_3$  the intercept and the slope after the second break. Testing for converge for the last period is equivalent to testing whether the parameters  $\mu_3$  and  $\beta_3$  are different from zero and negatively related. The last columns in Tables 4 and 5 summarize the results found in this analysis. In this case, and following

Tomljanovich and Vogelsang (2002) and Nieswiadomy and Strazicich (2004), C denotes catch-up (those cases in which the unit root hypothesis was rejected in favor of stationarity around different time trends and satisfy the  $\beta$ -convergence hypothesis in equations (2.1) and (2.2), D denotes divergence (stationarity around different time trends which do not satisfy the above  $\beta$ -convergence condition), and U denotes unit root (we did not find evidence to reject the unit root null hypothesis). We find evidence of a catch-up process after the break for Indonesia towards the US economy when we allow for only a break and for Angola and Indonesia when we allow for two possible breaks.

When we define per capita differences relative to the regional reference, we also find evidence of catch-up for Kuwait relative to West-Asian countries.

#### **4. Concluding Remarks**

In this article we have examined the real convergence process for 14 OPEC countries by means of using time-series tests over the period 1950-2006. We have defined convergence both towards the U.S. economy and towards alternative regional references, defined as the per capita GDP average of the region of each country (Africa, Latin America, East Asia and West Asia). Real convergence tests have been carried first based on ADF unit root tests, and then allowing for structural breaks.

Using ADF unit root tests, we find no evidence of unconditional convergence for any of the OPEC countries towards the U.S., although we find evidence of convergence for Nigeria towards the African average.

However, when we analyze the possibility of structural breaks, we find significant evidence of a structural break in the convergence process of these countries, with the break occurring in many cases 1979-1981. We interpret this

result indicating that the relative performance of these countries is related to the oil price, which after the 1979 crisis, experienced an increase. When we allow for this break, we find evidence of a catch-up process for Indonesia towards the U.S. However, the results suggest that, in general, OPEC countries have suffered the 1979 oil crisis in a more severe way than other countries.

When we apply unit root tests allowing for these two structural breaks, we find evidence of a catch-up process for two of the countries (Indonesia, Angola) towards the U.S. economy. In general, OPEC countries have experienced relatively higher growth rates after mid-eighties-nineties (the years coinciding with the second structural break). Furthermore, we also find convergence for Nigeria relative to Africa and Kuwait relative to West Asian countries after this second break. However, the results also suggest that relative per capita GDP in OPEC countries has grown below average in most of the cases, both when convergence is measured relative to US and when measured relative to regional references. That is, growth rates of most of these countries seem to be very dependent of oil prices.

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